

# TEACHER'S PACKET

## San Juan Bautista State Historic Park

**Welcome!** We want every group that visits San Juan Bautista State Historic Park to have the best trip possible. With that in mind, we have designed this teacher's packet for your school group so that an overview of San Juan Bautista is presented along curriculum guidelines. Please read this information prior to your visit and make sure that you secured a reservation with ***ReserveAmerica***.

### RESERVATIONS

To make school reservations, you must call ***ReserveAmerica*** at (866) 240-4655, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. After securing a reservation call the Mission at (831) 623-4528. Old Mission San Juan Bautista is a Parish Church owned and operated by the Catholic Church and is not part of the State Historic Park. Admission fee is free for K-12 grade groups on a school-sponsored field trip with a ***ReserveAmerica*** reservation. San Juan Bautista State Historic Park offers the following programs with reservations.

#### California Over Time

A park interpreter will, in a historic setting take a class through the different time periods and cultures in California relevant to 4<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum using pictures with cutouts with which selected students will put their faces in and "become" characters in history. This program helps students integrate their classroom learning with what they experience when they visit the park. The eras from the Native American period up the Gold Rush/Statehood time, circa 1850 are covered.

#### Mission Game

This program focuses on the Mission period of time. A class broken down into small groups of about five students will "design" a mission using clues and information given by the interpreter. This is a hands-on activity which encourages critical thinking while learning about the background behind the creation of the Mission system in California. At this time the program is not wheelchair accessible.

Each program has a per class charge of \$60.00 payable upon arrival at San Juan Bautista State Historic Park. Teachers please check in at the front desk of the Plaza Hotel.

## **PRE-COLUMBIAN SETTLEMENTS AND PEOPLE**

### **The Mutsun**

The Mutsun people were the first to live in the San Juan Valley. They were related to the Ohlone people from San Francisco Bay Area. The Mutsuns were organized around a tribelet consisting of one or more villages and several camps. The chief of the tribe, usually a man, was responsible for feeding visitors, caring for the poor, directing ceremonial activities and directing the efforts of fishing, hunting, gathering and warfare.

Women generally wore a braided tule or grass apron in front and a piece of deerskin trimmed with bird feathers and squirrel tails or rabbits in back. Men generally went naked. During cold weather, both men and women might wear a cape made from the skins of seal, deer or rabbit.

### **Popeloutchom**

One Mutsun village was located right where San Juan Bautista is today. It was called Popeloutchom. The Mutsun lived in dome shaped tule dwellings. They gathered acorns, soaked them in water to remove the toxins and ground them into a flour-like meal. They hunted deer, antelope, rabbits, quail, squirrel, fish and bear for food and clothing.

When the Spanish arrived and began the Mission, the Mutsun were converted to Catholicism and worked for the Mission. They made adobe bricks, constructed buildings, raised corn and other grains and worked the herds of cattle.

The last full-blooded Mutsun Indian, Mrs. Ascension Solarsano Cervantes, died in January 1930. She is buried in the Indian Cemetery beside the old Mission Church.

### **Vocabulary**

Father Felipe Arroyo de la Cuesta compiled many words from the Mutsun language. Some to use for classroom preparation include:

water	si
fire	soton
sun	ismen
hawk	she-oo-kert
acron	yukis
one	emichan
two	oo-chin
three	kap-han

## **SPANISH EXPLORATION AND COLONIAL HISTORY**

### **Exploration**

The first European to see present day California was Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542. Not long afterward, in 1579, Sir Francis Drake sailed along the California coast. In 1596, Spain claimed the West Coast of North America when Sebastian Viscaino sailed into the Monterey Bay.

By the 1800's, the Russians had settlements along the coast of the Pacific Northwest. They traveled off the coast of California hunting sea otters for their fur. Spain, wishing to secure California from Russian occupation, decided to settle the land through the construction of Missions.

### **Father Junipero Serra**

Father Serra was chosen to lead the development of the Mission system in Alta California. He was well educated, organized and experienced in missionary work, having established four missions in the Sierra Gorda region of Mexico. It would take him almost a year of planning before beginning the journey to Alta California. The people and stock traveled by land, and the supplies went by ship. In 1769, Father Serra founded the first California Mission in San Diego. He died in 1784, and is buried at the Carmel Mission.

### **Father Fermin de Lausen**

Upon Serra's death, Father Fermin de Lausen became Father-Presidente of the missions. Father Lausen was equally dedicated and able administrator, but is frequently overlooked because he took over after the initial pioneering development of the Missions. Nine missions were in existence when he started, and he had added nine more before he died in 1803. In 1797, he undertook the remarkable task of founding four missions in one year. One of those was the Mission San Juan Bautista. Father Lausen is buried beside Father Serra in the Carmel Mission.

### **The California Mission System**

The missions were more than just churches and workshops. They were the process through which Spain colonized California. In more than 250 years of colonizing different parts of the world, Spain had learned that the mission offered one of the most economical means of settling a foreign land. Spain lacked the population to send large numbers of people overseas to settle new lands. Instead, they looked to conversion of the native population into "limited" Spanish citizens. This called for not only the teaching of the Spanish language and political system, but also converting the native people to Catholicism.

The missions were intended to be temporary institutions. Once their work was finished, the native populations would be able to run a pueblo, be subject to civil law and would be under the spiritual guidance of a regular clergy. By the end of the mission era in 1834, the Indians at the 21 missions tended to 396,000 head of cattle, 62,000 horses, 321,000 pigs, sheep, goats and harvested 123,000 bushels of grain. None of these items had existed in California before 1769.

## MISSION SAN JUAN BAUTISTA

### Colonial Plaza Design

The Plaza in San Juan Bautista is one of the finest examples of Spanish Colonial Plaza design left in the New World. For this reason, it is a registered National Historic Landmark. Pueblos, or cities, were designed around common outdoor areas called Plazas. The Mission quadrangle was designed around a courtyard. The courtyard was the working area and center of town and was bordered by the Mission, government buildings, native dwellings and soldier's quarters. The Plaza in San Juan Bautista served as a work area, parade grounds, corrals for bull and bear fights and any other purpose which needed a large, open space.

### History of San Juan Bautista

1775	De Anza Expedition passes through.
1797	Mission is founded by Father Lausen.
1800	An average of 6 earthquakes per day for 19 days damages all the buildings.
1803	Cornerstone of the present day church was laid; largest Mission church in California.
1812	Mission church is completed.
1813	Soldier's quarters and guardhouse completed (now ground floor of Plaza Hotel).
1815	Nunnery built to house unmarried Indian girls (now the ground floor of the Plaza Hall).
1821	Mexico gains independence from Spain.
1834	Secularization of the missions begins (conversion from church to private property).
1835	Jose Castro appointed Comisionado at San Juan Bautista, later becomes acting Governor of California until 1836.
	Mission San Juan Bautista secularized.
1839	San Juan becomes the capitol of the First District of Alta California. Jose Castro named Prefect and builds Castro Adobe. Population of the town is 100.
1846	"Gavilan Peak Affair" occurs.
1848	Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded California to the U.S.
1849	September 9: California becomes the 31 <sup>st</sup> state in the Union.
1856-8	Plaza Hotel is built and opens for business.
1869	City of San Juan Bautista incorporated.
1874	San Benito County formed.

## **RANCHOS AND MEXICAN HISTORY**

### **Missions to Ranchos**

Mexico gained control of the missions upon winning independence from Spain in 1821. Secularization of the missions had been the goal of Spain. Mexico agreed and ordered all missions secularized in 1834. This meant that after the missions had fulfilled their function of “civilizing” the Indians, they were to be replaced by pueblos. The priests would retain only the Church and living quarters and function as the pueblo’s parish. The rest of the buildings and lands were to be given over for communal agriculture, development of the town and residences for each Indian at the Mission.

The Indians did not understand the European meaning of land ownership. They were easily traded and schemed out of their land. Indian lands rapidly fell into a few private hands, and the era of the Californio Rancho was born.

### **John C. Fremont**

Fremont was a colorful figure in California history. He explored the state in 1846 and raised the first U.S. flag over California. He helped organize the Bear Flag revolt and later became military governor of California, territorial governor of Arizona and was the Republican Party’s first presidential candidate in 1856.

### **Jose Maria Castro**

Jose Castro’s father was the administrator of the mission in San Juan Bautista and secularized the lands by selling them to friends and relatives. In 1838, Castro became prefect of the northern district and built the Castro Adobe as his office. He led two revolts against Mexican governors and worked against U.S. occupation of California.

### **The Gavilan Peak Affair**

John Fremont and his company of U.S. “surveyors” had been allowed to winter in California provided they stayed away from the coastal settlements. In March 1846, they suddenly appeared in the hills near Monterey. Castro notified Fremont that he would have to leave, but Fremont ignored the demand and led his men to the summit of Gavilan (now Fremont) Peak, overlooking San Juan Bautista. After three days of exchanging tense messages, Fremont decided to comply, and he withdrew.

In November, he returned to San Juan Bautista and spent nearly two weeks gathering supplies, horses and mules for the formation of the California Battalion. The Battalion left San Juan Bautista, met up with Andres Pico and signed the Treaty of Cahuenga, ending the hostilities between the U.S. and Mexico. Later, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded California to the United States.

## **WESTWARD MOVEMENT AND THE GOLD RUSH**

### **The Breen Family**

Patrick and Margaret Breen, along with their seven children, were members of the ill-fated Donner Party, which became stranded in the Sierra Nevada without supplies for 111 days during the extraordinary snows of 1846. In 1848, the Breen family arrived penniless in San Juan Bautista and were taken in by the Mission.

Although Jose Castro was busy trying to keep the Americans out of California, when he heard the Breen's tragic story, he provided them his adobe to live in until they could afford to purchase it.

### **Gold!**

Gold had been discovered in 1848, one of the Breen's sons, 16 year old John Breen, set out for the gold fields near Placerville. He returned later that year with about \$10,000 in gold dust, a considerable amount of money at that time.

With this wealth, the family purchased the adobe from Castro and 400 acres of prime agricultural land in the San Juan Valley. The adobe belonged to the family until it became part of the state park system in 1933.

### **A Natural Crossroads**

San Juan Bautista has always been a natural crossroads for people traveling in California. The town sits in a small valley that is connected by passes to the San Joaquin, Santa Clara and Salinas valleys. Because of this, if you wished to go to San Francisco, Monterey or Los Angeles, the easiest route passed through San Juan Bautista. This made San Juan Bautista a very important city during the Gold Rush when people and items for trade were moving across the state.

### **The Plaza Hotel**

The hotel actually dates to about 1813, when the lower floors were two separate mission soldier buildings. In 1856, a new life began for the structure when Angelo Zanetta, a 30-year-old master chef from New Orleans and a native of Italy, ran a saloon in the north end of the building during the Mission's Fiesta in June. He made \$3,000 in 24 hours!

Two years later, Zanetta, then a chef at a restaurant on Third Street, bought the south end of the current hotel building from the Breen family for \$450. At the same time, Zanetta leased the north end structure and immediately began a remodeling project to connect the two buildings and create a first class hotel, dining room and saloon. The Plaza Hotel's grand opening was in January 1859, and it quickly became famous across the state.

## **RAPID POPULATION GROWTH AND TRANSPORTATION**

### **Stagecoaches**

The Plaza Stable was built around 1874, to handle the stage and wagon traffic through San Juan Bautista. At one time, there were 7 stage lines operating in San Juan Bautista with up to 11 coaches arriving and departing daily. It was the primary staging, trade and supply center for the cattle and sheep ranches in Central California.

Stages were designed for about 17 passengers, though a stage is said to have left San Juan Bautista one day with 29 people aboard. Passengers had to get out and walk across bad spots in the road or up steep grades.

In 1876, the railroad bypassed San Juan Bautista, and the town's boom years began to decline.

### **Charley Parkhurst**

Charley Parkhurst was born around 1812, in New Hampshire. Stagecoach drivers were much admired men who were paid well for the difficult task of driving a team of horses over many miles of dusty trails. Charley was one of the drivers for the California Stage Lines in the 1850's that operated in San Juan Bautista. Charley was kicked in the face while shoeing a horse one day and lost an eye. "One-Eyed-Charley" was a fitting name for such a rugged stagecoach driver.

Charley died in 1879, and it was only then that a doctor confirmed that Charley Parkhurst was actually Charlotte Parkhurst, a woman. Charlotte realized early in life that she lived during a time when men had more advantages than women, so she adjusted her life accordingly. Thus "One-Eyed-Charley" the stagecoach driver was born.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### **San Juan Bautista Mission...**

- Is the 15<sup>th</sup> mission built in California
- Has the largest church of any mission and the only one with three isles.
- Has animal tracks in the adobe tiles in the church.
- Is constructed of adobe bricks made of mud, straw, manure, rocks and tile pieces.

### **Plaza Hotel...**

- Was originally a guard house and barracks for the mission soldiers.
- Barroom was the first room opened to the public in 1856.
- Rented rooms for \$1 - \$2.50 per night.
- Has a two-story outhouse because women did not like to go near the Barroom.

### **Castro-Breen Adobe...**

- Was first used as the Mexican government headquarters for Northern California.
- Was purchased in 1849, by the Breen family, survivors of the Donner Party.

### **Plaza Stable...**

- Was built around 1874, for the stagecoach traffic in town.
- Has 25 stalls with chutes for feeding horses from the loft.
- Has its original weather vane in the form of a trotting horse.

### **Plaza Hall...**

- Was originally a dormitory for unmarried mission Indian women.
- Was built in its current form by Angelo Zanetta to be the San Benito County Courthouse.
- Was converted to Zanetta's residence when the county seat went to Hollister.
- Has a children's room with toys from the 1800's.

## SAN ANDREAS FAULT

The fault can be seen at the end of the Plaza opposite the Plaza Hotel. Standing on the top of the hill by the cross, you are on the edge of the Pacific Plate. At the bottom of the hill (which is the fault scarp), is the North American plate. This is the San Andreas Fault that runs through much of the state and was responsible for the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.



